

# Vox Humana

Newsletter for ECU Department of Foreign Languages and Literatures

Winter 1999

## DR. ELLEN COURTNEY JOINS SPANISH FACULTY

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**D**r. Ellen Courtney has joined the Department of Foreign Languages and Literatures this semester as an Assistant Professor of Spanish. In December, 1998, Dr. Courtney received her Ph.D. in Second Language Acquisition and Teaching (SLAT) from the University of Arizona in Tucson, Arizona. Before that, she received her B.A. from Wellesley College and her M.A. from the University of Arizona. While at the University of Arizona, Dr. Courtney taught both Spanish and Modern English grammar.

With a graduate focus on linguistics, psycholinguistics, and language acquisition, Dr. Courtney decided to explore, as her dissertation project, the acquisition of Quechua grammar by Peruvian indigenous children between the ages of two and four years. For this purpose, she carried out fieldwork in Chalhuanca, a small village in the southern Peruvian highlands, located at 14,000 feet. Although Dr. Courtney had lived and taught in Arequipa, Peru, for nearly 20 years, the fieldwork took her to indigenous Peru for the first time. In the completed dissertation, *Child Acquisition of Quechua Morphosyntax*, Dr. Courtney laid the groundwork for further research with Quechua-speaking children.

Trained in interdisciplinary approaches, Dr. Courtney has a number of other research interests, including bilingual language processes, code-switching phenomena, and Navajo child language. She would also like to participate in developing programs for teaching culture-as-content in the language classroom, as well as community projects for promoting Spanish and English literacy within the local (im)migrant population.



*(Courtney con't on page 3)*

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# NORTH CAROLINA CONSORTIUM FOR STUDY ABROAD

## SEMESTER IN SPAIN

*The following is an interview with Dr. Michael Schinasi, who was Director in Residence of the study abroad program at the Universidad de Cantabria in Santander, Spain in Fall of 1997.*

**- Dr. Schinasi, how would you evaluate your experience in Santander?**

It was a great experience. The city of Santander provides a perfect setting for study abroad, since you don't hear English spoken on the street, with the exception of an occasional English tourist. Santander has about 250,000 inhabitants, and while it lacks some of the architectural charm of other, larger Spanish cities, it makes up for that with its great natural beauty. It is also much more affordable than a larger city would be, as well as safer and easier to get around in. Its location on the north coast of Spain also makes it easier to travel to other European cities (London, Paris, Rome), and of course, it's only a few hours to most places in Spain. Quite a few students go to France or Italy.

The students in the program the year I was director were the best I've ever had. They were very enthusiastic about being there and learning, and were very mature. I noticed that within five days of arriving, everyone's language skills had already improved, as everyone forced himself or herself to speak only in Spanish. I also noticed that being far from home made them lose their inhibitions, they were more willing to try new experiences without feeling embarrassed. For example, one day one of the professors taught them to dance the *sevillana*! They really had fun with that.

**- What about housing? Do the students live together in a dormitory, or with a Spanish family?**

One of the best parts of the program is the experience of living with a Spanish family. The people there do a fine job of selecting families (none of whom speak English, by the way). The students always wanted to bring members from their host families along with them for activities, and to meet the other students. They were able to get as close to the family personally as they wanted; some of them became quite close, others preferred to have more "space". Many of the families took their guests around sightseeing on their own. I think what was most difficult for them was getting used to the different meal schedule. But they all loved Spanish cooking -- and it's really healthy, a lot of seafood.

**- What cultural activities does Santander offer?**

The university offers a wide variety of interesting cultural programs. For example, students were able to attend a professional production of Lorca's *Yerma* staged by Francisco Nieva (a famous playwright himself), a student production of *La casa de Bernarda Alba*, and jazz and piano concerts, just to name a few. I should also mention that next year they will also offer an orientation session hosted by the Vice President of the university, that will be a first. There is really a lot to do in Santander and classes are arranged on a schedule that permits students to travel a lot.

**- Speaking of travel, what excursions were included with the program itself?**

The excursions were guided by professors from the university who were experts in what was being toured. For example, there was a visit to the Roman ruins in Burgos guided by a history professor, who knew a lot of fascinating information. She really gave us the "inside scoop" about what life was like in Roman Spain.



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# INTERNATIONAL SYMPOSIUM NEAR FORBIDDEN CITY

MARTIN SCHWARZ

I was privileged to attend the 4th International Symposium on Foreign Language Teaching, organized jointly by the University of Northern Iowa and Beijing University of Aeronautics and Astronautics, held in Beijing, PRC, in early October, 1999. For many reasons, it was a memorable week, a non-stop series of activities, both cultural and scholarly. Some 200 participants from several Chinese provinces, Australia, Germany, and the United States, presented papers on the campus of BUAA. Our Chinese hosts went out of their way to make our stay enjoyable and profitable. The many excursions they organized, interspersed with professional activities, included visits to the awesome monuments from the Imperial Age, the Summer Palace, the Temple of Heaven, the Ming Tombs, and of course, the Great Wall, the only monument visible from outer space.



My fondest memory is of a long stroll through the Forbidden City, which echoes the magnificence of the past. I could not resist the temptation of slipping into the imperial yellow silks to imagine myself for the briefest moment as the “last emperor of China.” I enjoyed immensely losing myself in the festive crowd, celebrating the 50th year of the Revolution, admiring the floats of the parade on Tiananmen Square, watched benevolently by a large portrait of Mao, which adorns the Presidential Palace. I threw all caution to the winds, and ate some magnificent meals, consisting of too many courses to count, but wisely stayed away from fried scorpions, though not from the duck foot webbing.

But perhaps the most satisfying experience was to meet so many colleagues who struggle to teach English to their students, who had never been outside their country, and who opened their hearts to us. The “human experience” will remain with me long



after the pictures will have faded, and the yellow silks will have been worn by countless others. For one brief moment, we managed to bridge the cultural differences and obliterate the physical distance separating two continents, in a common goal embraced by professionals from many corners of the earth: that of lessening the gulf separating us through the acquisition of a foreign language.

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*(Courtney con't from page 1)*

Dr. Courtney and her husband, Kevin, have four grown Peruvian-American children, who have decided to remain in Tucson, Arizona. (Their Golden Retriever and cat have made the move to Greenville.) The Courtneys are both especially interested in the welfare of the Hispanic community, and they also enjoy Latin dancing—salsa, cumbia, and merengue.

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# HURRICANE FLOYD TOUCHES GCB

Departmental faculty and staff were overall lucky and did not sustain much damage. A tree fell on Dr. Steve Dock's car, which was demolished. Another tree fell on the car of Dr. Nancy Mayberry's son. Dr. Brian Harris and his wife, along with Dr. Richard Hattendorf, were evacuated from their homes in Washington, but were able to return rather quickly. Their houses did not sustain much damage. The floodwaters came close to the homes of Dr. Bill Seavey and his family and of Dr. Michael Schinasi and his family.

The newest member of our department, Ms. Sheila Davis, was not so fortunate. Her home near Pactolus was damaged by flooding, her furniture in storage completely ruined, and her car a total loss. Her parents in Pactolus fared even worse; they lost everything. They are now rebuilding.

The General Classroom Building was not spared during the flooding that followed the heavy rains brought by Hurricane Floyd. The lower level of the building filled with water, damaging equipment including the air-conditioning, the fire alarm, and parts of the electrical system. Damages amounted to well over \$250,000.

For days after faculty and staff were allowed back into the building, there was no air-conditioning. Phone service came back slowly. The building was patrolled by fire marshals and faculty were not allowed in on week-ends until the fire alarm system was operating again.

The building had to be fogged twice to kill mold and mildew and prevent them from growing again. Stairwells were cleaned and walls repainted. The smell of mildew still lingers in some places.

In the aftermath of the flooding, many of the Spanish faculty worked in shelters: Mr. Gary Ambert, Mrs. Anne Borisoff-Rodgers, Mrs. Susanna Castaño-Schultz, Mrs. Carol Christian, Mrs. Helga Hill, Dr. Nancy Mayberry, Dr. Miriam Reed and Dr. Marcela Ruiz-Funes. They helped members of the Hispanic community deal with relief agencies, sorted clothes, filled out forms, distributed food and in general did anything that needed to be done.

We are all glad that this year's hurricane season is over and only hope that next year will be better.



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*"During the flood, a student in Dr. Ruth Moskop's class was lifted from his home by helicopter. Guess what he took with him to the shelter...? His German book"*

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## December Graduates

### **Spanish**

Danielle Custis  
Ashley Taylor  
Kirsten Dickerson

### **German**

Jay Keever  
Rachel Barkey

### **French**

Jennifer Roberson



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## RECENT FACULTY PUBLICATIONS

**PETER STANDISH, *LÍNEA Y COLOR***

Frankfurt and Madrid, Vervuert/Iberoamericana, 1999

Dr. Standish first had the idea for *Línea y color* when reading a poem that took its inspiration from Velázquez, but in fact portrayed a verbal image that was deliberately falsified for the poet's artistic purposes. He began to look at the different ways in which poets, especially Spanish poets of the twentieth century, exploit visual art in their work. That led him to look into the relationship between the so-called "sister arts", and at the limitations imposed by their different expressive means, the one visual and the other verbal. The result is a book that considers a selection of poems in relation to specific works of art, or artists. About twenty of the paintings referred to in *Línea y color* are reproduced in color, and many more can be compared using the Internet. The idea was never to exhaust the subject, but to stimulate interest and offer an unusual interdisciplinary approach.



**CHARLES FANTAZZI:** *The Education of a Christian Woman, A Sixteenth-Century Manual* by Juan Luis Vives. Edited and translated by Charles Fantazzi. The Other Voice in Early Modern Europe Series. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, early 2000



From the book's back cover: "From meetings and conversation with men, love affairs arise. In the midst of pleasures, banquets, dances, laughter, and self-indulgence, Venus and her son Cupid reign supreme. . . . Poor young girl, if you emerge from these encounters a captive prey! How much better it would have been to remain at home or to have broken a leg of the body rather than of the mind!" So wrote the sixteenth-century Spanish humanist Juan Luis Vives in a famous work dedicated to Henry VIII's daughter, Princess Mary, but intended for a wider audience interested in the education of women. Praised by Erasmus and Thomas More, Vives advocated education for all women, regardless of social class and ability. From childhood through adolescence to marriage and widowhood, this manual offers practical advice as well as philosophical meditation and was recognized soon after

publication in 1524 as the most authoritative pronouncement on the universal education of women. Arguing that women were intellectually equal if not superior to men, Vives stressed intellectual companionship in marriage over procreation, and moved beyond the private sphere to show how women's progress was essential for the good of society and state."

**OTHER PUBLICATIONS :**

**Debra Anderson**, "*Le rire dans Le Nègre et d'Amiral de Raphaël Confiand*," *Francographies*, 8 (Nouvelle Série) 1999, pp. 49-57.

**Sylvie Debevec Henning**, "Attitudes des étudiants américains envers la France et le Québec," *Francographies*, 8 (Nouvelle Série) 1999, pp. 167-178.

**Irena Ustinova**, "Escape from Ward Six: Russia Facing Past and Present," *Slavic and East European Journal*. 43:3, 1999.



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## Faculty Presentations Fall 1999

*Purificación Martínez:*

Utrecht, Netherlands: 2<sup>nd</sup> Conference on the Medieval Chronicle 7/16-7/21 "Using the Past to Defend the Present: Alfonso XI and the Crónica de tres reyes"

Santander, Spain, VIII Congreso Internacional de la Asociación Hispánica de Literatura Medieval 9/22-9/26

"Alfonso X y Alfonso XI, dos propósitos historiográficos: los prólogos a la Estoria de España y a la Cronica de tres reyes"

*Stephen Dock:*

Lexington, Kentucky: Society for Interdisciplinary French 17<sup>th</sup> Century Studies 11/11-11/14 Secretary/Treasurer of SE17 Society, Respondent in the section "Entre hommes/Entre femmes."

*Marcela Ruiz-Funes:*

Raleigh, NC: Foreign Language Association of North Carolina 10/28-10/30

"Foreign Language Education: Linking Theory of Practice"

*Debra Anderson:*

Chattanooga, Tennessee: 48<sup>th</sup> Annual Mountain Interstate Foreign Language Conference 10/7-10/10

"Of Myth and of Woman: The American World of Maryse Condé"

*Ellen Courtney:*

Groningen, Netherlands: Language in Contact (Center for Languages and Cognition Groningen) 11/25-11/26 "Duplication in the L2 Spanish produced by Quechua-speaking children: Transfer of a pragmatic strategy"

*Martin Schwarz:*

Beijing, China: 4th International Symposium on Language Teaching, 10/5-10/10

"Foreign Language Requirement: a New Direction"

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*Schinasi con't from page 2*

We also went to see the prehistoric paintings on the walls of the Ramales de la Victoria caves, which are not normally open to tourists. Belonging to the university group is the only way that most people would ever get to see them. Of course, we took a trip to Madrid, and Salamanca and La Rioja as well.

**- What about social life?**

The program sponsors mixers where Spanish and American students can meet. There was some exchange between the students, some of our students formed friendships with Spaniards. They went out on the town with them, showing them around, taking them to clubs -- after all, Spain is famous for its nightlife.

**- Please tell us a little more about the program itself.**

The American students take classes together, but they are all given in Spanish. They start off with a language skills course before the other classes begin. That's the only course the American Director teaches, the rest are taught by Spanish faculty.

The price is a tremendous bargain. Last year, it was \$6,400 -- but that includes airfare, all tuition, books and fees, and room and board with your host family with two meals a day. That also includes the field trips. Compared to other programs this one is very inexpensive.

Of course, students will also want to travel on their own, and have spending money. Overall, I'd take between \$7,500 and \$8,000.

Applications are due at the Office of International Affairs the last week of February but will be accepted after that, as well. Anyone who wants to talk about the program should feel free to come and see me.

**- What do you think the most valuable things are that the student takes away from this experience?**

In addition to the language skills and understanding of the culture, it is a great experience of individual freedom -being away from your own culture can be liberating and allow you to see, to do, to do many things that you've never seen, done or tried before, and that maybe you never even would have considered. That can mature a person.

I also think that distancing yourself from your own culture is important, so you can reflect upon it and perhaps gain perspective.

**- And for you?**

What I most enjoyed was watching the young people flowering into adulthood.

*Interview by Dr. Purificación Martínez*



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## **VOX HUMANA**

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**WINTER 1999**

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**ATTENTION ECU FOREIGN LANGUAGE GRADUATES!**

Let us know what you've been up to since graduation for the Alumni News section of *Vox Humana*. Please drop a note to:

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Be sure to include:

Name (maiden name as well if applicable): \_\_\_\_\_

Years at ECU, major/minor: \_\_\_\_\_

Where you are & what you're doing \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

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